

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated December 18, 2002, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejection of the claims.

Claims 1-16 were objected to, as allegedly containing informalities. While Applicant respectfully submits that a person of ordinary skill in the art could readily understand the scope of the invention from the original language of the claims, the terminology in the claims has been revised to incorporate, or otherwise address, the Examiner's suggestions. These changes are being made solely to expedite prosecution, and not for purposes related to patentability or any issues raised by the prior art.

With respect to claims 2-16, the Office Action suggests that the opening article "A" should be replaced by "The". The basis for making such a request is not apparent from the Office Action. Applicant is unaware of any authority suggesting that a dependent claim must begin with the article "The". To the contrary, MPEP § 608.01(n) presents examples of acceptable dependent claims, all of which begin with the article "A". Similarly, the dependent claims in the Walker et al. patent, cited in the Office Action, begin with the article "A". Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that this claim terminology has been explicitly deemed to be acceptable by the Patent Office. If the objection is not withdrawn, the Examiner is respectfully requested to explain the basis for the request, and identify any authority that may support it.

Claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, on the grounds that they were considered to be anticipated the Wang patent (U.S. 6,175,922). It is respectfully submitted

that the Wang patent neither anticipates, nor otherwise suggests, the subject matter of the present invention.

The objective of the present invention is to simplify the use of services in a multi-operator environment, such as a transport system. In prior art systems, a user is typically required to possess separate tickets for each service associated with a different respective operator. Thus, for example, to ride a train the user may need one ticket, and then to ride a bus a different ticket may be required. The present invention overcomes this inconvenience by providing a solution that enables one ticket to be used for multiple operators' systems. To this end, a system in accordance with the present invention includes a first means that is specific to a first operator for acquiring information from a ticket issued by that operator and authorizing a service according to the acquired information. In addition, a second means, identified as a "consulate", is provided for receiving information from a ticket issued by another operator, and transmitting an authorization to render the service to the first means. Thus, in the example given above, a commuter may employ a ticket issued by the train operator to ride the train, and then use the same ticket to ride a bus, even though the bus is operated by a different operator. The commuter is therefore relieved of the inconvenience of having to purchase and carry a second ticket for the bus.

The rejection of claims 1-16 contains a description of features disclosed in the Wang patent. However, it does not associate those features with the elements of the rejected claims. For example, with reference to claim 1, the Office Action does not identify any structure in the Wang patent which could be deemed to correspond to the consulate means recited in the claim. For this reason alone, it is respectfully submitted that the Office

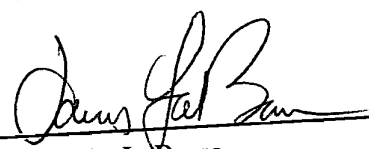
Action has failed to identify how the Wang patent anticipates the subject matter of the claims.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that a number of other features of the invention, recited in the various dependent claims, are likewise not disclosed in the Wang patent. In view of the fundamental distinction recited in claim 1 that is noted above, a detailed discussion of these other features will not be presented at this time.

If the rejection of any of the claims on the basis of the Wang patent is maintained, the Examiner is requested to identify how the Wang patent is being interpreted to disclose the elements recited *in the claims*. In the absence of such a showing, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: 
James A. LaBarre
Registration No. 28,632

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620

Date: March 18, 2003